Field Guide Summary

An ethical challenge is the Algorithmic hiring systems that encode and scale gender bias from historical data. This is morally problematic because it results in unjust discrimination and the denial of equal opportunity to qualified candidates, despite the absence of explicit intent to discriminate. From a deontological perspective, organizations have a duty to treat persons as ends in themselves, not merely as data points optimized for efficiency; proxy discrimination violates respect for persons and equal moral worth. Consequently, biased screening inflicts foreseeable harms: lost income and advancement for individuals, reduced diversity and innovation for firms, and broader social entrenchment of inequality. The opacity of complex models undermines accountability and due process, frustrating the moral requirements of explainability and contestability in decisions affecting basic interests. Even if legally compliant, disparate impact signals a failure of distributive justice: benefits and burdens are allocated along historical fault lines. Moreover, the diffusion of responsibility across data scientists, HR, and leadership creates moral buck-passing, conflicting with professional duties of nonmaleficence and due care. The core moral tension is efficiency versus fairness: without explicit fairness constraints, governance, and human-in-the-loop review, algorithmic hiring predictably optimizes past prejudice, compromising autonomy, dignity, and just access to work.